The National Heritage Fellowships 1994

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The National Endowment for the Arts

Folk & Traditional Arts Program

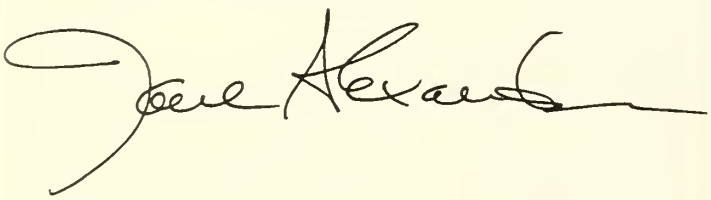
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWS 1994

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Welcome to a National Endowment for the Arts tradition—the annual presentation of the National Heritage Fellows. Each year since 1982, the Endowment, through its Folk & Traditional Arts Program, has honored some of our nation's most accomplished and influential artists who have worked to preserve, shape, and share the traditions of their heritage—part of *our* heritage as Americans. And how great and gloriously multi-faceted that heritage is! To date, 173 National Heritage Fellowships have been awarded to artists in 48 of the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, D.C.

As a group, the 1994 National Heritage Fellows are typical of the artistic, cultural, and geographic breadth the Fellows have represented every year—Irish fiddling from Chicago, Passamaquoddy Indian basketry from rural Maine, Hispanic embroidery from New Mexico, African-American gospel singing from the South's "gospel belt", Japanese *chado* (tea ceremony) arts from Los Angeles, Western Swing fiddling from Texas, Arabic *oud* playing from Brooklyn, and more. If individually, the Fellows seem bigger than life, it is because each represents a tradition larger than him or herself. Each is a conduit for the hands, the voices, and the aesthetic ideals of those who came before them and who share their particular cultural heritage.

All of us at the National Endowment for the Arts invite you to join in this uniquely American occasion as we celebrate these individual artists and our country's stunning panorama of traditional artistry that enriches all of our lives. Please join us in thanking, applauding, and cheering these extraordinary Americans for the lifetime of achievement that brings them to us tonight as the 1994 National Heritage Fellows!

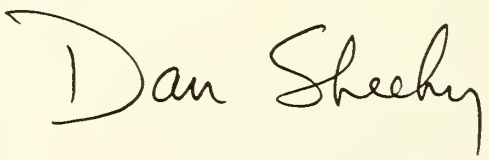


Jane Alexander
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

"Without tradition, there is no creation. Without creation, you cannot maintain a tradition." These sage words of the renowned writer Carlos Fuentes hint at the importance of the folk and traditional arts to society, to culture, and to the arts at large. They also underscore the notion that tradition must evolve along with the community it represents in order to remain "traditional." In other words, it may need to *change* to remain the *same*.

As you will discover this evening, this aesthetic tightrope—balancing continuity with change—has confronted most of the 1994 National Heritage Fellows, and they have not shrunk from the challenge. They have embraced the deepest aesthetic tenets of the traditions passed on to them, even while they have reshaped and adapted those traditions to a changing environment of artistic taste, cultural meaning, or economic sustenance. Some have created new musical styles, fresh compositions, or original designs. Others have found creative ways to give age-old forms new relevance in a shifting social surround.

The National Heritage Fellows are selected through a process similar to that of most National Endowment for the Arts grant categories, although the artists do not apply; they are nominated by their fellow citizens. Nominations are reviewed by the Folk & Traditional Arts advisory panel using three criteria: artistic excellence, authenticity, and significance within tradition. After further review and approval by the National Council on the Arts and the Arts Endowment Chairman, the awardees are brought to Washington, D.C. to receive their $10,000 fellowship and to be honored in the halls of Congress and in this public celebration. We are pleased to welcome them and you to this family reunion of American traditions.



Dan Sheehy
Director
Folk & Traditional Arts Program

Master of Ceremonies

Roger Welsch is a folklorist, humorist, author, and television personality. He regularly hosts the "Postcards from Nebraska" segment of "Sunday Morning" on CBS, bringing glimpses of life in and around his farm in Dannebrog, Nebraska to millions of viewers. His book *It's Not the End of the Earth, But You Can See It From Here: Tales of the Great Plains* tells humorous and moving stories of life in the rural Great Plains. He served on the Folk Arts Program advisory panel from 1978 to 1980 and was its chairman in 1980.

Above: Roger Welsch, photo by Ray Pickthorn

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National Heritage Fellowships are one-time-only grants for $10,000 awarded to exemplary master folk artists and artisans who have been nominated by their peers. The nomination criteria are authenticity, excellence, and significance within a particular artistic tradition. Those nominated should be actively participating in their art form, have a record of ongoing artistic accomplishment, and be worthy of national recognition.

Liz Carroll

Irish traditional music has been an important thread in America's artistic fabric since the immigration of an estimated seven million Irish fleeing famine, poverty, and oppression in the mid and late 19th century. Irish musicians from remote villages in the old country met and exchanged ideas and regional repertoires and styles. New, urban, Irish "villages" took shape in places like Chicago and the Bronx in which Irish fiddlers, pipers, flutists, harpists, and the like, enjoyed a lively, creative musical ambience. While the first Irish recordings were made in New York, the "bible" of Irish tunes appeared in Chicago in 1903, an enormous (still the largest anywhere) compilation by Chicago's Chief Superintendent of Police, Francis O'Neill. It was said that O'Neill had an open job offer on the police force for any good fiddler or piper. In the mid-1900s, this older-style Irish music with its ancient Gaelic ballads and vast instrumental repertoire was falling increasingly into disfavor, edged out by mass pop culture and a new breed of pop songsters singing tunes on Irish themes. But traditional Irish music refused to die, and, aided by a continuing migration from the old country, it experienced a reinvigoration that began in the 1970s and continues to this day. Central to this Irish music renaissance is fiddler Elizabeth "Liz" Carroll.

Liz Carroll was born in Chicago in 1956 of Irish immigrant parents from County Offaly and County Limerick. Her father, a button accordion player, began teaching her Irish traditional music when she was 5, and Liz also had the opportunity to hear her grandfather play during visits to Ireland. Although she studied classical violin for a brief period with a nun at her parochial school, local concerts of Irish music, *sessions* (informal Irish musical gatherings), and her family were her main sources of musical schooling. Liz honed her skills through years of playing at meetings of the Irish Traditional Musicians Association, and exposure to the music of veteran Chicago Irish musicians Johnny McGreevy, Joe Shannon, Seamus Cooley, Jimmy and Elenor Neary, and others, who imbued her with a wealth of tunes, techniques, and stories that gave her a breadth and depth of musical and cultural knowledge possessed by few of her generation. In 1975, after a series of stunning victories in the junior divison of the All-Ireland Fiddle Championship, Liz, then 18 years of age, astounded the Irish music world both in the U.S. and in Ireland by winning the senior division championship title. In accomplishing this feat, she was immediately recognized as one of the most outstanding Irish fiddlers of all time. This is still true today. Folklorist and concert producer Nick Spitzer says of Liz: "She is widely admired for her wide repertoire of tunes [that includes many of her own compositions] and for her enthusiastic but carefully crafted playing that mingles a variety of regional styles."

Liz Carroll's artistry flows from a

deep sense of connection and devotion to Irish music and culture. As she has commented, "It's just one of those ingrained things, the kind of thing you keep going back to." Liz has never worked full-time as a musician, preferring to stay close to home in order to raise her children and to take part in the many sessions that take place in homes and community gathering places in and around the Cook County area (once jokingly referred to as "County Cook," for its important international place in Irish music). Occasional excursions from her Chicago home have taken her to festivals and concerts, including the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, the National Folk Festival, and the "Folk Masters" concert series at Wolf Trap, among others.

Clarence Fountain and the Blind Boys

Since the 1960s, commercial gospel music has most often taken the form of soloists backed by large choirs. Its predecessor, though, was a much smaller group of four or five members singing one-on-a-part that stretches back to 19th-century minstrel and black college singing and the jubilee quartets that were especially popular in the 1930s. In the wake of the great

Left: Liz Carroll
photo by Suzanne Plunkett

Right: Clarence Fountain and the Blind Boys
photo by Michael P. Smith

migration of rural southern Blacks northward in the early 20th century, gospel pioneers like C.A. Tindley of Philadelphia, Thomas Dorsey of Chicago, and W. Brewster of Memphis wrote music that combined elements of European choral singing and harmony with the more African preferences for alternation between a lead singer and group response, vocal devices associated with early blues and jazz, and a more syncopated rhythm. This new, urban musical sound left its mark on jubilee quartets that in the 1940s continued to evolve into "gospel" quartets, as they incorporated the highly emotive character of the "sanctified" music of Pentecostal and Holiness churches into the style of the lead singer and a more driving rhythm. While in the commercial realm of gospel, the large choir style predominates, quartet music still commands a strong following among Black church members in both the North and South.

Clarence Fountain and the Blind Boys were "discovered" by theater-going audiences in 1987 when they appeared in the Obie-winning musical "Gospel at Colonus," an adaptation of the Greek tragedy "Oedipus at Colonus." But in reality, this was only the latest success in the history of the group that started in the early 1940s as schoolmates singing together at Alabama's Talladega Institute for the Deaf and Blind. Founding member Clarence Fountain remembers how after the group scored its first hit record "I Can See Everybody's Mother But Mine" in 1949 and was signed by Specialty Records in 1953, there was great pressure to switch over to the rock 'n roll sound of pop music. But Fountain refused, saying, "Rock is alright for those who are into it, but the Blind Boys have devoted our lives to serving the Lord."

While the group has experienced changes in membership over the years, current members Clarence Fountain, Jimmy Carter, George Scott, and Johnny Fields are outstanding veterans of quartet singing and have been with the group since the 1940s. And as a group, they have kept their integrity intact, upholding the nickname "house-wreckers," given to the most exciting quartets in recognition of their ability to "shout" the church by stirring their listeners into states of spiritual ecstasy. "We never really had a chance to be on big national TV shows or anything like that," Fountain once said, "because I think we were a little too intense for that. So we built our audience the really hard way: night after night, town after town, from one side of the country to the other."

Today, Clarence Fountain and the Blind Boys continue to draw large audiences to theaters, churches, festivals, and nightclubs around the country, as they have for over 50 years. More and more, they are reaching broad audiences outside of the Black church network. Recent appearances include the World Music Institute in New York City, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Monterey Bay Blues Festival, the San Francisco Symphony Summer Pop Series, and the Detroit Festival for the Arts.

Mary Mitchell Gabriel

The centuries-old basketmaking traditions of Maine's Indian tribal peoples are today at perhaps the most important juncture of their history. While interest in basketmaking has been on the wane among tribal youth, a heightened concern for the future of their culture and a deep love of their artistic tradition has motivated a determined group of basketmakers and cultural advocates to act. Unprecedented collaborations between several tribes and state arts and natural resource agencies have tackled problems of dwindling supplies of basketmaking materials, inadequate markets, and disinterest in learning traditional aesthetic principles and skills. Central to these efforts among the Passamaquoddy people is one of the most accomplished and giving basketmakers of the region—Mary Mitchell Gabriel.

Mary was born in the Passamaquoddy Indian Township of Princeton, Maine, in 1908. Her mother and grandmother were dedicated basketmakers and her father built birchbark canoes, paddles, and snowshoes. She began learning the skills of making Passamaquoddy baskets out of sweet-

grass and brown ash splints from her grandmother. "I pestered her to teach me," she said. Under her grandmother's direction, she made her first basket when she was seven or eight years old. Mary's daughter Sylvia, also a basketmaker, described the change in traditional style that they both were a part of: "In the beginning, Indian women made the baskets for their own use. Later, tourists arrived and wanted to buy them. As time went on, the baskets became more and more fancy. We all learned from one another. They handed down the traditions." Traditionally, basketmakers would harvest sweetgrass from the coastal salt marshes in July and allow them to dry for several months before braiding them. Brown ash logs were pounded to loosen each ring, which was then stripped to the desired length and thickness. In her younger years, Mary did all this herself, but now she purchases the sweetgrass and splints from other tribal members.

Mary's baskets are both traditional and individualistic, reflecting both a recognition of the need to produce marketable baskets and a strong personal creative sense. "[Some ideas just] pop out of my head," she says. Her basket types range from the popular striped bowl basket, to the striped "sea urchin"-shaped bowl basket, to her "baked bean crock," to the larger sewing and flat baskets. Many of her covered baskets display her "trademark" braided frog handle that she created. One remarkable aspect of her baskets is the closeness of their weave, which not only is beautiful, but ensures that their beauty will last long into the future. "If I am to be remembered for my baskets, I want them to live forever," she once said. Her sweetgrass braiding skills are well honed, and at one time she could weave nearly 100 yards in a day.

Though Mary Gabriel has long been known among her people as a fine basketmaker, significant wider recognition has only come in recent years through awards and exhibits featuring her work. She has been a senior counselor to the burgeoning basketry revival among Maine Natives, and most importantly, she continues to produce baskets of extraordinary beauty. As she once said, "I've asked the Lord to please let me keep making my baskets and I guess He must agree!"

Johnny Gimble

In the words of Merle Haggard, Johnny Gimble is "the greatest [Texas] swing fiddler alive today." Born in East Texas in 1926, and raised on a farm near Tyler, Johnny Gimble became heir to both the old and the new of the immensely influential fiddle traditions of Texas. The Depression years of the 1930s saw the old-time, Southern-derived Anglo string band tradition with its breakdowns, schottisches, waltzes, and reels blend with the big-band jazz and pop music of the day to form a new sound known as "Western swing." Epitomized and promoted by renowned bandleader Bob Wills and his group, The Texas Playboys, in the 1940s and later, Western swing rose

to prominence nationally as one of the most popular American regional musics. In 1949, Johnny Gimble and his fiddle became part of that band and continued to bring the Texas fiddle sound into the lives of millions of Americans through recording and live performance.

Johnny was playing mandolin and fiddle professionally with his brothers by age 13. Following his graduation from high school, he performed with the Shelton Brothers on KWKH radio in Shreveport, Louisiana, and in the campaign band during Jimmie Davis's (the singing governor of "You Are My Sunshine" fame) successful bid for that state's highest office. He did a stint in the military during World War II, and then continued to hone his skills playing with a number of Texas radio and dance bands until he joined Bob Wills. According to Jim Day, President of the Texas Old Time Fiddlers Association, "During those years [with the Playboys] Johnny was very likely the most talented and technically gifted fiddler of all the fiddlers who played with Bob Wills band. As Bob Wills is given credit for making Western Swing famous, Johnny Gimble had much to do with the development of the sound and rhythm of Western Swing." He left Wills' band to settle down and raise his children in Waco, where he had a television show for three years, cut

Left: Mary Mitchell Gabriel
photo by Fred Knapp

Center: Johnny Gimble
photo by Keith Carter

Right: Frances Varos Graves
photo by Stephen Bradley

hair at the Veterans Administration hospital, and played for dances on weekends.

Then, in 1968, he moved to Nashville with his wife Barbara and his $5,000 life savings. He arrived in Nashville at a time when interest in the fiddle was on the rise. He recorded with Merle Haggard ("If We Make It Through December"), Conway Twitty ("You've Never Been This Far Before"), Connie Smith ("If It Ain't Love"), and other popular artists. In 1975, he won the Country Music Association's coveted "Instrumentalist of the Year" award, the first of the five times he received it. He was proclaimed "Fiddler of the Year" eight times by the Academy of Country Music and received a Grammy in 1994 for his arrangement of "Red Wing" on the Bob Wills tribute album by the group Asleep at the Wheel. Several of his compositions like "Slow 'N Easy Blues" and "Under the 'X' in Texas," are widely performed and were re-recorded on his 1977 album, *Johnny Gimble's Texas Dance Party*.

Despite his commercial success, Gimble remains close to his roots, volunteering as guest performer at educational and charitable events. In recent years, he has appeared at the National Folk Festival, Houston's "Texas Country Roots" concert organized by Texas Folklife Resources, and the "Folk Masters" series at Wolf Trap. "Folk Masters" artistic director Nick Spitzer summed up the opinions of many traditional music connoisseurs about Gimble: "He was always a consummate musician, an articulate commentator on the roots and branches of Texas country fiddling, and highly respected for his abilities and generosity by fellow musicians."

Frances Varos Graves

In the deeply-rooted Hispanic culture of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, weaving and embroidery have long been a major medium of artistry. Born of the necessity in Spanish colonial times of providing warmth, "*colchas*," or blankets fully embroidered with a characteristic form of stitch, are in a sense the regional Hispanic equivalent of the quilt. In the early years of the 20th century, as mass-produced items began to displace the meticulously hand-embroidered colchas, Frances Varos Graves was largely responsible for an important counter-current to this trend that has kept colcha embroidery an art and emblem of her regional Hispanic culture.

Born Frances Varos in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico, in 1910, she moved to the northern New Mexican Mormon community of Carson in 1929 to work mending and repairing blankets (Rio Grande and Navajo weavings) for several blanket traders that included Claude Graves, whom she married in 1931. Although her maternal great grandfather had been a weaver and her mother had passed on her knowledge of spinning and dying wool and needlework, Frances saw her first colcha in Carson. "We bought an old colcha in Ojo Caliente. Part of it needed mending so we tore it apart and copied the stitch. We kept on practicing until we got it right....Right after I got married I started making colchas for my own use. I made my first one on gunny sacks for the floor. Money was hard to get and we were paying off our land. Claude was working for the State Highway Department for $3.75 per day and I made colchas. A store owner in Chamita wanted every colcha that I made. He would give part cash and part trade....I have worked on colchas since then and have taught and exhibited my work."

As other women in the area followed her example and started their own colcha cottage industries, a "Carson colcha" style emerged that incorporated new stitch patterns and new motifs into the old form. As described in a Millicent Rogers Museum exhibit, "Carson colchas are relatively easy to identify in that they reflect an Anglo sense of pictorial composition and are relatively large in size when compared to earlier ones. In addition, the materials used in the making of a Carson colcha are almost all recycled....Another identifying feature....is the vertical direction of the stitches, whereas in the older colcha embroideries, the stitches follow the curves of the pattern".

Frances Varos Graves continues to produce her distinctive colchas. Her work has been exhibited widely, appearing in one-woman shows in Taos, the *One Space/Three Visions* exhibit at the Albuquerque Museum, the widely-toured exhibit *Spanish Textile Tradition of New Mexico and Colorado* at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, and the *Colcha Embroidery of Northern New Mexico* exhibit at the Millicent Rogers Museum, among others. Her niece and her grandson's wife produce and sell colchas, and through her participation in the New Mexico Arts Division's state apprenticeship program,

Left: Violet Hilbert
photo by Joseph Scaylea

Right: Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto
photo by Mr. Miyatake

she continues to pass on her "Carson colcha" tradition to future generations.

VIOLET [ṯaqʷšəblu] HILBERT

Born in the Skagit Valley of Washington State in 1918, Violet "Vi" Hilbert was part of a generation that grew up speaking the Lushootseed (Puget Sound Salish) language, shared by several Native American tribes from the Puget Sound eastward to the Cascade Mountains. As a child, she was surrounded by accomplished traditional orators and storytellers. Her father was a tribal historian and one of the last speakers of the Skagit Coast Salish language. Her mother Louisa Anderson was a skilled raconteur and an ebullient public speaker, and her father Charlie Anderson possessed a rich store of traditional stories and song. As a young girl, she traveled with her parents picking berries throughout the Northwest and attended 15 schools before receiving her high school diploma. Though she was forbidden to speak her Native tongue at Indian boarding schools, outside of school she was raised according to the old values by her mother and father, who valued their family history and who were proud of the rich store of ancestral names and stories that, according to tribal tradition, they owned and she would inherit. She attended important tribal ceremonial events such as funerals and naming ceremonies and was taught the strictest standards of propriety that require generosity, discretion, and forbearance. An immense repertoire of traditional tales, artfulness of rhetorical style, and the function of stories in maintaining tribal history were key to her traditional upbringing.

In the 1960s, years after the deaths of her parents, her concern for the rapidly diminishing number of Lushootseed speakers and the infrequency of ceremonial settings for oratory took her on a one-woman mission of cultural preservation that continues to the present. "There are very few places where the stories are still being told, and the people who know them are dying....That's why I feel such a sense of urgency to collect and write the remnants I know." As a cultural conservator, she is eager to remind tribal young people of the aesthetic depth of storytelling and its centrality to Native culture. "[The] best storytellers could become the characters in their stories," animating rocks, trees, and animals with subtle changes of voice and gesture. At many social occasions for storytelling, "there was duck soup and bread and coffee. People who were hosting...would invite their friends and relatives to join them. My parents would bring cattail mats for us to sleep on because the party went all night." In keeping with her concern for making the stories a part of her people's future, she studied linguistics and labored hard to translate the often subtle meanings into English so that those who did not learn the language may understand.

Vi [ṯaqʷšəblu] Hilbert has taken Lushootseed stories to wide audiences—non-Native and Native American—throughout North America. She has lectured and taught at universities and on her own Upper Skagit reservation, has continued to speak at tribal ceremonial events, has transcribed, translated, and published her stories, and has appeared in many public events, such as the National Association for the Perpetuation and Preservation of Storytelling Festival in Tennessee. In 1989, she received the Washington Centennial Commission's Ethnic Heritage Award. Her people say she often reminds them of the story of the race between the Bear and the Ant to dig a hole. While Bear took frequent rests, Ant never stopped to rest. He worked so hard that he stretched himself thin, almost to the point of breaking in the middle. Ant won the race, and ṯaqʷšəblu's unflagging energy and dedication won her the affectionate title "Ant."

SOSEI SHIZUYE MATSUMOTO

In East Asian cultures, many artistic traditions are considered to be ways of achieving self-discipline as well as a means of producing aesthetically engaging expressions of cre-

ativity. There are numerous venerable examples of these "meditative arts," but in Japan none is more highly esteemed or inclusive of different artistic media than *chado*, or "way of the tea." In the words of Gerald Yoshitomi, "The art of Tea has been characterized as the very essence of Japanese culture, embodying as it does the various artistic disciplines of ceramics, architecture, horticulture, landscape architecture, visual art, literature, and calligraphy, not to mention the mental discipline which goes into the formation of one's character."

Chado is a complex series of hundreds of steps designed around the act of serving tea and requires a connoisseurship of all the necessary physical accoutrements as well as acute sensitivity in the disciplined interaction between its participants. When properly practiced, the natural setting, the delicately wrought tea utensils, the simple elegance of the decorations, and the smooth, regulated movements of the participants combine to remove the host and guests from the pressures of the outside world and place them in an atmosphere where each finds inner peace and tranquility. Historically, chado has left its mark on many other art forms. In the 16th and 17th centuries, for example, tea masters influenced the shaping of some of the most beautiful of ceramic tea ware, always preferring the simple, rustic, and spare over the highly finished and refined.

In the United States, the most influential teacher and accomplished master of chado is Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto. Mme. Matsumoto was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1920. Her interest in cha-no-yu (or chado) as a young woman took her to Kyoto, Japan, where she studied for seven years to master the essence of the tea ceremony, and she received a teaching credential from Tantansai, the 14th generation Grandmaster of the Urasenke School of Chado. Following the conclusion of World War II, she saw that there were few practitioners of the tea ceremony among Japanese-Americans in her new home of Los Angeles, but her desire to start a school was thwarted by the unsettled times, with her people returning from the wartime internment camps. In 1951, she was invited to the signing of the U.S.-Japan peace treaty in San Francisco, where over a four-day period she and the Urasenke Grandmaster served tea to more than 3,000 American and Japanese officials, including President Truman and Prime Minister Yoshida. That same year she opened the first tea ceremony classes in the United States, and presented the tea ceremony in the Twentieth Century Fox film "East is East." In the 1950s, Mme. Matsumoto introduced millions of Americans to chado through appearances on CBS and NBC. In 1968, she was invited to present at the Olympic Arts Festival in Mexico City. Her more than 40 years of teaching and lecturing throughout the country has resulted in over 120 credentialed chado teachers and thousands more tea ceremony devotees.

Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto has received numerous awards: a special commendation from the Minister of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Japan (1960); a Special Recognition Award from the Urasenke School in Kyoto (1960); the honorable master of tea ceremony, "Meiyo Shihan" (highest teaching certificate) from the Urasenke School (1989); the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center's President's Award (1989); and The Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Rays from the Emperor of Japan in 1990, the highest form of such recognition. She has long been the major American proponent of the art of chado and its message of "peace from a bowl of tea." In the words of Chado Urasenke Los Angeles Chapter head Glenn Webb, "Mme. Matsumoto is the very embodiment of a 'tea person,' or *chajin*. She not only knows (and can teach) all the procedures for Chado; she also manifests the true spirit of self discipline and compassion for others, which only a few students of tea attain. To the extent that she embodies the ideal human being as defined in traditional Japanese society, she is the perfect role model."

D.L. Menard

D.L. Menard is a singer, a guitarist, a writer of songs that speak to the deepest sensibilities of Cajun people, and much more. In the minds of many, it is especially fortunate that he came along at perhaps the most critical time in Cajun history since the French-speaking Acadians first migrated to Louisiana from what is now Canada to escape religious and cultural persecution in the late 1700s. Born in 1932, he was raised in the heart of Cajun country near the town of Erath, when Cajun French was forbidden in schools and

Left: D. L. Menard
photo by Joe Pfeffer

Center: Simon Shaheen
photo by Richard Laird

Right: Lily Vorperian
photo by Galian Photography

Cajun music was said to be crude, and when the ever-more intrusive pop culture vied for the values and minds of Cajun young people. But D.L. never consciously tried to preserve a lifestyle or to be a spokesman for his people. His wit, unfailing good humor, generosity, and overall make-up embodied a self-confident, quintessential Cajun character that, combined with his intense musicality, projected liveliness, strength, and creativity into Cajun life.

Growing up, D.L. was a fan of Hank Williams and early country music. "I first learned to sing by listening to an old battery-powered wooden radio that we had. Every night, I turned it on to listen to Del Rio, Texas, and I learned those songs that I heard on the radio. The battery would die every year about a month or two before we sold the cotton....

That was the hardest time, without the radio. I didn't play the guitar yet, but that's where I learned all my first songs. And all those songs were in English. I couldn't hear any French songs on the radio" (from *The Makers of Cajun Music* by Barry Jean Ancelet). When D.L. was 16 years old, his parents quit farming and moved into town. There he heard his first live Cajun music and immediately fell in love with the guitar. He ordered one from a catalog for $11.00 and learned to play. His first dance job was in Abbeville with Elias Badeaux and the Louisiana Aces, embarking on a musical path that would place him firmly in the era of Cajun music marked by post World War II road houses, honky-tonks, and family dance halls.

At first, D.L. specialized in singing English language songs and left the Cajun ones to the more experienced singers. Soon, he was not only applying his heartfelt voice to songs in French, but began composing new songs, and adding French words to instrumentals. The local popularity of one of his first songs surprised everyone, including himself. "In those days, a [recording] session cost $175, which included 300 records, you understand, and you could sell them. 'La Porte d'en Arriere' (The Back Door) came out on a Wednesday and by Saturday I had my $175 back already and some extra money to split among the guys in the band....That night, we had to play it seven times on the bandstand." "La Porte d'en Arriere" and many of his other songs like "Un Homme Marie" and "La Vie d'un Vieux Garcon," have become part of the standard traditional repertoire. To pursue his musical interests, D.L. quit his service station job to find another, more flexible job. He learned how to make chairs, and opened a shop next to his house. His comfortable rockers are found in homes throughout the area, and when he appears at folk festivals, he often demonstrates chairmaking when he's not playing music.

Since 1973, D.L. has been taking Cajun bands to festivals, including the National Folk Festival and the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife. He has represented the U.S. abroad, touring for the State Department to South and Central America, Asia, the Near East, and Europe, and has come to be one of the most well-known representatives of Cajun culture. In his words, "It made us feel so proud of our culture to see people from all over applauding the music we brought them from south Louisiana."

Simon Shaheen

The *ud* (also, *oud*), a pear-shaped lute, has been in Arabic musical tradition since at least the 7th century, having been borrowed from their Persian neighbors. The long-time favor it has commanded among musicians from many musical traditions, both rural and urban, throughout the culturally diverse Arab world has given the ud great stature as a vehicle for highly-developed artistry and an important source of identity and common ground among Arabs and Middle Easterners. In Arabic cultures, most masterful musicians do not feel impeded by the boundaries of categories like "folk," "classical," and "popular" as they move freely between repertoires and styles intended for different occasions, and this is particularly the case with the highly adaptable ud. Since his immigration to the United States in 1980, Simon Shaheen has been recognized as the premier Arabic ud virtuoso in

this country, and in the words of Arab ethnomusicologist and musician Jihad Racy, "[Shaheen] is one of the top musicians in the entire Arab world."

Simon Shaheen was born in 1955 in the Arab village of Tarshiha in the Galilee region of Israel. He first took up the ud at age four, and under the tutelage of his father, Hikmat Shaheen, a renowned teacher and composer of Arabic music, performed his first public improvisation at age six. Simon fondly recalls studying with his father: "It wasn't like music lessons. My father played, and I played too." After moving to Haifa, he studied Western classical violin at the Rubin Conservatory and went on to Tel Aviv, where he earned a B.A. in music and Arabic literature. In Israel, he took part in an extended performance of Arabic music in concerts and festivals between 1973 and 1978. He also collected Palestinian folk music from the Galilee region which, in recent years, he incorporates into his own music. When he came to the United States, he earned an M.A. in Music Education from Columbia University and an M.A. in Music Performance from the Manhattan School of Music.

In the U.S., Simon has proven himself a highly versatile, virtuosic, and creative musician who knows few boundaries, social or musical. Upon his arrival, he mainly made his living playing at a wide range of social occasions for Middle Easterners of many backgrounds. Increasingly, his exquisite talents have been recognized by critics and presenters, bringing him greater opportunity to display his concert-oriented, creative side. *New York Times* critic Tim Page has likened him to the Spanish guitarist Segovia, and Edward Rothstein has written of his "virtuosic sophistication." Shaheen has composed many new works in an "art music" style, incorporating a "subtle combination of traditional Near Eastern techniques with contemporary [Western] ideas of form," according to scholar Philip Schuyler.

While he now devotes great effort to his personal musical career, his compositions, and his Near Eastern Music Ensemble, he has not let this narrow the range of his musical interests nor limit his concern for his fellow Arabs in the United States. He travels widely to perform at important Arab events, and to share his skill with developing Arab musicians. He has been a vital force in keeping these traditions alive. In the words of his nominator Margaret Wolfson, "Mr. Shaheen's authentic cultural and musical roots, his extraordinary skill and experience as performer and teacher, his fluency— derived from natural ability and serious study—in both Near Eastern and Western musical styles, his vibrancy as a person and dedication to his musical heritage, combine to make him an ideal instrument to transmit and preserve Arab folk and traditional music in this country."

Lily Vorperian

It often seems that the incomprehensible social upheaval experienced by Armenian people who fled the massacres of 1915 in their homeland only strengthened their resolve to maintain their unique cultural identity. In Southern California, the "Capital of the Diaspora" where over 300,000 Armenians live, many of their most venerable traditions are alive and in some ways flourishing. In 1989, Armenian oudist Richard Hagopian of Fresno was recognized through a National Heritage Fellowship for his tasteful musicianship and for his efforts to keep traditional music a part of Armenian social life. In Armenian crafts, no artist commands greater respect than Lily Vorperian: inheritor, practitioner, and creator of Marash-style embroidery.

Lily Kambourian was born a refugee, in Aleppo, Syria, in 1919, three years after her parents had fled the Armenian city of Marash. Raised

in the Armenian colony in Aleppo, she married Haroutioun Vorperian in 1937, had four children, and was widowed in 1953. She moved to Beirut in 1964 and came to the U.S. in 1978, once again escaping the disasters of war. At age 12, she began embroidering, learning from the elderly women who came to her house daily because it was a center for refugee aid distribution. With the exception of her high school years and while she was raising young children alone, she has dedicated herself to her embroidery. Though she is familiar with 18 other regional Armenian embroidery styles, she always preferred that of her parents' home town of Marash, known for its tasteful color combinations, intricate designs, and complex, demanding stitchery. When asked why she favored the Marash style, she answered "Because it is the hardest. It's the same with cooking. I always want to prepare the hardest things."

Ms. Vorperian is a master of her craft, an artist of national and even international stature. In the words of folklorist Susan Auerbach, "Not only is her workmanship in a complex technique superb, but her intricate designs bring Marash work to a new aesthetic level, while still keeping to traditional forms. Marash embroidery is the vehicle through which she expresses her creative energy and vision, as well as her passionate cultural pride....While most women who still do Marash work rely on ready-made patterns or repeat a few simple designs, Lily creates her own work from start to finish and takes pride in devising so many variations on Marash-style design." Lily often boasts of the neatness of her work: "Look how clean it is on the back." Her Marash technique barely pricks the surface of the reverse side, even though the basis of each design is interconnected herringbone stitches, over and under which the thread may be woven four or even eight times. Clusters of squares or crosses then become the building blocks for bold patterns. The effect is slightly raised and intricate, reminiscent of traditional Armenian wood-carving, stonework, or jewelry engraving. In recent years, she has been known for her embroidery of slogans and names in the Armenian alphabet that speak her sentiment concerning the tragedy of her people, such as "Oh, Armenian people, your only salvation is in your collective strength."

Today, her work motivates her more than ever. "I feel a lot younger. I want to show that I can do 10 times this amount if I live." Admiring cultural compatriots and non-Armenians alike share her desire, inviting her to exhibit and demonstrate her work at festivals and exhibit sites in California, such as the Los Angeles "City Roots Festival" and the Armenian Cultural Festival sponsored by the City of Los Angeles. The Armenian Relief Society proudly displays its logo, a large Marash embroidery by Lily Vorperian.

Elder Roma Wilson

As is often the case with music passed on through aural tradition, an artist's creations may become more famous than the artist himself. This is certainly the case with harmonica player, singer, and composer Elder Roma Wilson, whose music is known to millions of Americans, while he remained in obscurity until being "rediscovered" in the 1980s by his former partner in song, Reverend Leon Pinson.

Roma Wilson was born in 1910 and hails originally from Tupelo, Mississippi. Folklorist Worth Long recounts Wilson's early musical life: "Elder Roma Wilson learned to play the harmonica as a boy with old, worn-out harps discarded by his older brothers. He learned to 'choke' these harps in order to get traditional sounds out of them. He was taught by both traditional secular and sacred harp masters and became known throughout the state for his version of the song 'This Train.'" A young minister as well as accomplished harpist, Wilson subsequently teamed up with the young, blind, guitar-playing Reverend Pinson to travel around Mississippi and Arkansas, preaching the gospel on the "brush arbor" circuit and playing the religion-inspired music for which they both became known as masters.

In the 1940s, he parted ways with Pinson and moved to Detroit to raise his family, making his living as a street musician on Hastings Street. It was here that Joe Von Battle, owner of Joe's Record Shop covertly recorded Wilson's astonishing harp-blowing and subsequently released a 78 rpm recording of "Lily of the Valley" and "Better Get Ready," on the Gotham label. These recordings became legendary, and when they were re-released in 1983 by St. George Records, the liner notes stated: "Concerning Elder R. Wilson, nothing of a background nature is

Right: Elder Roma Wilson
photo by Jack Vartoogian

available for study. Robert [Richard] remembered recording with a preacher, but sadly nothing else....Hopefully more information will surface on this charismatic preacher who blew harp and quite possibly had the help of ascending masters, as blues legends claim that one sold one's soul to the devil to play that well." Elder Wilson replies: "That ain't true. I'm alive and well in Mississippi and still don't play no blues." Elder Wilson also taught his sons to play the harp, and in another 1940s recording at Joe's Record Shop, he and his three sons made what is now considered to be an important historic 78 rpm release of what Mike Seeger has called "the single most important selection by multi-harp players in existence."

Elder Wilson and Reverend Pinson were reunited when Wilson returned to Red Hill, Mississippi, in the 1980s. They have since performed at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Chicago Blues Festival, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, the National Black Arts Festival, and other major events. In 1991, the Southern Arts Federation took them to venues throughout the South as part of the "Deep South Musical Roots" tour. Elder Wilson's performances today, usually coupled with his long-time partner Pinson, move audiences as much as they ever did, as described by David Whiteis of the *Chicago Sun-Times*: "Wilson, who alternates his harp blowing with 'brush arbor' preaching in the traditional southern rural style, provides eloquent accompaniment and a gentle impetus for Pinson's fretwork. Together they provide a rare testimony to the power of music as a vehicle of faith."

CREDITS

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Costume Coordinator
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Amy Dowling
Janice Holland
Mike Misawa

The National Heritage Fellows 1982-1993

1982

Dewey Balfa*
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney*
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell*
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones*
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez*
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee
Blues Guitarist
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Bremen, GA

Lydia Mendoza
Mexican-American Singer
Houston, TX

Bill Monroe
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce*
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich
Tamburitza Musician
Dolton, IL

Georgeann Robinson*
Osage Ribbonworker
Bartlesville, OK

Duff Severe
Western Saddlemaker
Pendleton, OR

Philip Simmons
Ornamental Ironworker
Charleston, SC

Sanders "Sonny" Terry*
Blues Musician
Holliswood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker*
Shaker Singer
Poland Springs, ME

Rafael Cepeda
Bomba Musician/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks*
Appalachian Musician/Storyteller/Instrument Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Carlos, CA

Mike Manteo*
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez*
Texas-Mexican Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle*
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Joe Shannon
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Alex Stewart*
Cooper/Woodworker
Sneedville, TN

Ada Thomas*
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer*
Black Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward*
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier*
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook*
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotten*
Black Songster/Songwriter
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch
Hammered Dulcimer Maker/Player
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter
Black Singer/Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault
Black Seagrass Basket Maker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougin*
Lebanese-American Lace Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill*
Irish-American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard "Sandman" Sims
Black Tap Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley
Appalachian Banjo Player/Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Espanola, NM

Dave Tarras*
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana*
Eskimo Maskmaker/Dancer/Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofes Vigil*
Hispanic Storyteller/Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau'i Zuttermeister*
Hula Master
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta
Hispanic Weaver
San Luis Valley, CO

Periklis Halkias
Greek Clarinetist
Astoria, Queens, NY

Jimmy Jausoro
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Meali'i Kalama*
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford*
Appalachian Musician/Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard*
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua
Hmong Musician
Portland, OR

Julio Negron-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument Maker
Morovis, PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Oglala, SD

Glenn Ohrlin
Cowboy Singer/Storyteller/Illustrator
Mountain View, AR

Henry Townsend
Blues Musician/Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

Horace "Spoons" Williams*
Spoons/Bones Player/Poet
Philadelphia, PA

1986

Alfonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin
Black Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero*
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot
Black Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna
Cambodian Court Dancer/Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria
Mexican-American Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Joyce Doc Tate Nevaquaya
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega
Hispanic-American Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut*
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Mascot, TN/Chattaroy, WV

1987

Juan Alindato
Carnival Maskmaker
Ponce, PR

Louis Bashell
Slovenian Accordionist/Polka Master
Greenfield, WI

Genoveva Castellanoz
Mexican-American Corona Maker
Nyssa, OR

Thomas Edison "Brownie" Ford
Anglo-Comanche Cowboy Singer/Storyteller
Hebert, LA

Kansuma Fujima
Japanese-American Dancer
Los Angeles, CA

Claude Joseph Johnson*
African-American Religious Singer/Orator
Atlanta, GA

Raymond Kane
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitarist/Singer
Wai'anae, HI

Wade Mainer
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Flint, MI

Sylvester McIntosh
Crucian Singer/Bandleader
St. Croix, VI

Allison "Totie" Montana
Mardi Gras Chief/Costume Maker
New Orleans, LA

Alex Moore, Sr.*
African-American Blues Pianist
Dallas, TX

Emilio and Senaida Romero
Hispanic-American Craftsworkers in Tin and Embroidery
Santa Fe, NM

Newton Washburn
Split Ash Basketmaker
Littleton, NH

1988

Pedro Ayala*
Mexican-American Accordionist
Donna, TX

Kepka Belton
Czech-American Egg Painter
Ellsworth, KS

Amber Densmore*
New England Quilter/Needleworker
Chelsea, VT

Michael Flatley
Irish-American Stepdancer
Palos Park, IL

Sister Rosalia Haberl
German-American Bobbin Lacemaker
Hankinson, ND

John Dee Holeman
African-American Dancer/Musician/Singer
Durham, NC

Albert "Sunnyland Slim" Luandrew
African-American Blues Pianist/Singer
Chicago, IL

Yang Fang Nhu
Hmong Weaver/Embroiderer
Detroit, MI

Kenny Sidle
Anglo-American Fiddler
Newark, OH

Willie Mae Ford Smith*
African-American Gospel Singer
St. Louis, MO

Clyde "Kindy" Sproat
Hawaiian Cowboy Singer/Ukulele Player
Kapa'au, HI

Arthel "Doc" Watson
Appalachian Guitar Player/Singer
Deep Gap, NC

1989

John Cephas
Piedmont Blues Guitarist/Singer
Woodford, VA

The Fairfield Four
African-American a capella Gospel Singers
Nashville, TN

Jose Gutierrez
Mexican Jarocho Musician/Singer
Norwalk, CA

Richard Avedis Hagopian
Armenian Oud Player
Visalia, CA

Christy Hengel
German-American Concertina Maker
New Ulm, MN

Ilias Kementzides
Pontic Greek Lyra Player
Norwalk, CT

Ethel Kvalheim
Norwegian Rosemaler
Stoughton, WI

Vanessa Paukeigope Morgan
Kiowa Regalia Maker
Anadarko, OK

Mabel E. Murphy
Anglo-American Quilter
Fulton, MO

LaVaughn E. Robinson
African-American Tapdancer
Philadelphia, PA

Earl Scruggs
Bluegrass Banjo Player
Madison, TN

Harry V. Shourds
Wildfowl Decoy Carver
Seaville, NJ

Chesley Goseyun Wilson
Apache Fiddle Maker
Tucson, AZ

1990

Howard Armstrong
African-American String Band Musician
Detroit, MI

Em Bun
Cambodian Silk Weaver
Harrisburg, PA

Natividad Cano
Mexican Mariachi Musician
Monterey Park, CA

Giuseppe and Raffaela DeFranco
Southern Italian Musicians and Dancers
Belleville, NJ

Maude Kegg
Ojibwe Storyteller/Craftsman/Tradition Bearer
Onamie, MN

Kevin Locke
Lakota Flute Player/Singer/Dancer/Storyteller
Mobridge, SD

Marie McDonald
Hawaiian Lei Maker
Kamuela, HI

Wallace McRae
Cowboy Poet
Forsyth, MT

Art Moilanen
Finnish Accordionist
Mass City, MI

Emilio Rosado
Woodcarver
Utuado, PR

Robert Spicer
Flatfoot Dancer
Dickson, TN

Douglas Wallin
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Marshall, NC

1991

Etta Baker
African-American guitarist
Morgantown, NC

George Blake
Native American craftsman (Hupa-Yurok)
Hoopa, CA

Jack Coen
Irish-American flautist
Bronx, NY

Rose Frank
Native American cornhusk weaver (Nez Perce)
Lapwai, ID

Eduardo "Lalo" Guerrero
Mexican-American singer/guitarist/composer
Cathedral City, CA

Khamvong Insixiengmai
Southeast Asian singer (Lao)
Fresno, CA

Don King
Western saddlemaker
Sheridan, WY

Riley "B.B. " King
African-American bluesman
Itta Bena, MS and Las Vegas, NV

Esther Littlefield
Alaskan regalia maker (Tlingit)
Sitka, AK

Seisho "Harry" Nakasone
Okinawan-American musician
Honolulu, HI

Irvan Perez
Isleno (Canary Island) singer
Poydras, LA

Morgan Sexton *
Appalachian banjo player/singer
Linefork, KY

Nikitas Tsimouris
Greek-American musician (bagpipe player)
Tarpon Springs, FL

Gussie Wells
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Arbie Williams
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Melvin Wine
Appalachian fiddler
Copen, WV

1992

Francisco Aguabella
Afro-Cuban drummer
Manhattan Beach, CA

Jerry Brown
Potter (southern stoneware tradition)
Hamilton, AL

Walker Calhoun
Cherokee musician/dancer/teacher
Cherokee, NC

Clyde Davenport
Appalachian fiddler
Monticello, KY

Belle Deacon
Athabascan basketmaker
Grayling, AK

Nora Ezell
African-American quilter
Eutaw, AL

Gerald R. Hawpetoss
Menominee/Potowatomi regalia maker
Milwaukee, WI

Fatima Kuinova
Bukharan Jewish singer
Rego Park, NY

John Naka
Bonsai sculptor
Los Angeles, CA

Ng Sheung-Chi
Chinese *Toissan muk'yu* folk singer
New York, NY

Marc Savoy
Cajun accordion maker/musician
Eunice, LA

Othar Turner
African-American fife player
Senatobia, MS

T. Viswanathan
South Indian flute master
Middletown, CT

1993

Santiago Almeida
Texas-Mexican conjunto musician
Sunnyside, WA

Kenny Baker
Bluegrass fiddler
Cottontown, TN

Inez Catalon
French Creole singer
Kaplan, LA

Nicholas & Elena Charles
Yupik woodcarver/maskmaker and skinsewer
Bethel, AK

Charles Hankins
Boatbuilder
Lavallette, NJ

Nalani Kanaka'ole & Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele
Hula Masters
Hilo, HI

Everett Kapayou
Native American singer (Mesquakie tribe)
Tama, IA

McIntosh County Shouters
African-American spiritual/shout performers
Townsend, Georgia

Elmer Miller*
Bit and spur maker/silversmith
Nampa, ID

Jack Owens
Blues singer/guitarist
Bentonia, MS

Mone & Vanxay Saenphim-machak
Lao weaver/needleworker and loommaker
St. Louis, MO

Liang-xing Tang
Chinese-American *pipa* (lute) player
Bayside, NY

* (deceased)